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ABSTRACT

This essay examines the administration of public multi-campus universities, focusing in particular on central administration and the State University of New York (SUNY) system and on responses to the need for fiscal austerity. Before treatment of the main topic begins, the essay offers a look at five reasons for the suspicion and resentment that are commonly directed at college and university administrations. These reasons have to do with: (1) the allocation of resources; (2) faculty-administrative tensions; (3) disproportionate expansion of administrations in recent years; (4) faculty suspicion of that expansion; and (5) administrators as political targets. The essay goes on to argue that a central administration can be a structure through which a degrees of coordination, focus, stewardship and leadership with more academic integrity and less political intrusion can be exercised. Next the text lists the 12 principal responsibilities of the system's central administration: (1) leadership including establishing a mission and advocating for students, the state and citizens; (2) supervision of campus or institutional chief operating officers; (3) allocation of resources; (4) assessment, termination, and initiation of academic programs and research projects; (5) formulation of student access policies; (6) oversight of policies relating to the needs and behavior of students; (7) stewardship of state resources; (8) information and institutional research; (9) public relations; (10) personnel policies; (11) legal services and representation; and (12) consolidation of support services. The document goes on to examine each function first generically and then as it operates in the SUNY system. A final section details seven specific roles of the central administration in times of austerity. (JB)

NUMBER 1

STUDIES IN PUBLIC HIGHER EDUCATION

STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

Central Administrations of Public Multi-Campus College and University Systems

Core Functions and Cost Pressures, with Reference to the Central Administration of the State University of New York

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D. Bruce Johnstone

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Central Administrations of Public Multi-Campus College and University Systems: *Core Functions and Cost Pressures, with Reference to the Central Administration of SUNY*

Although the purpose of this essay is to explain, not to defend, central administrations, and even to suggest ways that they can become leaner and more effective, it may be useful to begin with a deeper examination of the suspicion or even resentment that is commonly directed at college and university administrations. Five reasons for such sentiment seem especially pertinent and widespread.

First, one of the responsibilities of administrations is to allocate resources — perforce to their own operations as well as to the faculty and to other strictly academic operations. Whatever the allocation of resources may be — or more specifically, whatever the administration's share of cuts in hard times or of bounty in good times — the suspicion that the top administrators, in universities or in any other organizations, protect themselves and their staffs is pervasive, and probably impervious to any demonstration to the contrary. The deepening financial austerity of the 1990s, especially in the public sector, is clearly exacerbating this mood.

Second, faculty are typically individualistic, substantially autonomous in their work, and generally impatient with anything bureaucratic. There is a natural inclination to resist and even to look slightly down upon the offices (not necessarily the persona) of presidents, vice presidents, deans, and other administrators. To many faculty, a place to work, time to do research, access to the computer, a good library, and convenient parking are all that are truly important, and any number of administrators beyond those absolutely required to fulfill these minimal expectations is probably excessive.

A third reason for a general suspicion that administrations may be excessive is that they <u>have</u> grown in the past two decades, nationally on average faster than have the faculty, and there <u>do</u> exist powerful forces for the expansion of non-teaching staff. One such force is the open-ended appetite of faculty, students, parents, and other constituencies for services. There seems never to be <u>sufficient</u> student advising and counseling, for example, or <u>adequate</u> instructional support or libraries or computer technicians or institutional advancement and promotion. State and federal laws calling for even more reporting, analyzing, and checking have imposed large administrative

costs on colleges and universities. Beyond the clear legal requirement for more administration, the fear of bad audits, lawsuits, and criticism from trustees or the media have probably contributed to administrative accretion. In short, faculty suspicion of the tendency of administrations to expand is probably well-placed. One of the tasks of chancellors and presidents in these very difficult times is to look more closely and critically at all of the university's nonteaching tasks, the needs for which can seem so compelling at the time, and to roll back those whose downsizing or outright loss would do the least harm to the institution's core missions of teaching, research, and service.

Finally, administrations and administrators can be tempting political targets, particularly when there is a need to assign blame or to attempt to make a case why more budget cuts need not cause any "real" damage to the university's academic mission. Regardless of the talent, efficiency, reputation, or productivity of an administrator, he or she will almost always seem to some more expendable than a member of the faculty, regardless of their respective reputations or contributions to the mission of the institution.

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Administrations of colleges or universities — meaning the campus president or chancellor, the vice presidents or vice chancellors, the various deans and directors, and all of their support staffs — have always been the subjects of special interest and scrutiny, particularly in hard times, when cutbacks are imposing hardships on academic departments and when every dollar spent for an administrative function seems to be a dollar denied to another worthy endeavor. Trustees, elected officials, students, and others also give college and university administrations and administrators an especially hard and critical look at a time when cuts are being made throughout the public and private sectors of the economy and when many acknowledged needs of public universities are going unfulfilled for want of funds.

This scrutiny may be applied especially to the central administrations of multi-campus systems — administrative operations that are typically separate from any campus and that are even less understood and thus more vulnerable in times of austerity

than campus administrations.* The purpose of this essay is to define what it is that system central administrations do, both generically and with special reference to the State University of New York system, and to suggest some central administrative strategies in response to the politics and the realities of fiscal austerity.

Central Administrations of Multi-Campus Systems

Multi-campus public college and university systems, each one of which entails some kind of central system administration, have become the dominant mode of higher educational governance in the United States. Forty-one of the 50 states have organized their public colleges and universities into some 58 multi-campus systems, embracing almost 7 million of the more than 10 million students educated in the public higher education sector. System administrations, headed by a chancellor or president and supporting a single system governing board, have been found to be the most effective and efficient way, on the one hand, to achieve coordination and balance among the naturally competing individual campuses, and on the other hand to advocate with a unified voice on behalf of those campuses and their faculty and student bodies to the executive and legislative branches of state government.

Thus, the system trustees and the system central administrations protect the campuses from what would be, in the absence of the system, considerably more intrusion from legislative com-

*A college or university system is two or more campuses (usually more at a minimum, and extending, in the case of the State University of New York, to more than 60), each with substantial institutional autonomy and internal integrity (e.g., with its own faculty senate and its own procedures as well as its own curricular requirements and campus missions) and headed by a chief operating officer with the title of "president" or "chancellor" (interchangeable), all under a single governing board, which in turn is served by a system chief executive officer, also generally titled "chancellor" or "president." A multi-campus system is to be distinguished from a flagship campus with several or many branches, and also from a set of campuses or systems, each with its own governing board, that is in turn coordinated by some kind of statewide body, although each of these arrangements has characteristics of a true multi-campus system, and the boundary between "systems" and some of the "flagships with branches" may be neither clear nor particularly significant.

mittees, individual legislators, or various executive offices of budget or management and control. A system, while it still features a central administration charged with some degree of oversight and control, at least assures administrative leadership that is academic in orientation and usually in experience, and that is beholden to a board of trustees and to the member campuses and their presidents rather than directly to the state executive or to any political party or legislative body. In short, a public campus system — with a single governing board, a single system head, and central administrative backup — can be seen as a structure through which may be exercised a degree of coordination, focus, stewardship, and leadership with more academic integrity and less political intrusion than would be likely in its absence.

Responsibilities of System Central Administrations

The principal responsibilities of a governing board of a public multi-campus system, and thus of its chief executive officer and system central administration, are the following:

- Leadership to the system, to public higher education, and to higher education generally, including the establishment of a systemwide mission, the approval of constituent campus missions, and advocacy for the needs of the state and its students and citizens;

- The appointment, compensation, periodic evaluation, occasional removal, and constant support of campus or institutional chief operating officers;

- The allocation of resources among the institutions comprising the system;

- The assessment, approval, initiation, and rescission of academic programs and research endeavors;

- Policies and programs to assure student access to the system as a whole;

- The oversight of board and systemwide policies dealing with the needs, interests, and behavior of students;
- Business administration and stewardship over state resources;
- Information and institutional research;
- Public relations and advocacy;
- Personnel policies, terms and conditions of employment, and (if provided by law) collective bargaining;
- Legal services and legal representation of the board and of staff and faculty acting on behalf of the system;
- Consolidation of administrative and academic support services.

This section examines each of these system functions, first generically as they might apply to any multi-campus public college or university system, and then to the State University of New York.* The demands placed on the governing board, and thus on the chief executive officer and on the system's central administration, illustrate the responsibility, authority, and some of the necessary administrative resources called for in a period of great austerity and stress, yet a period, also, of mounting demands on administrations for *more* effective stewardship of resources, *more* strategic planning, *more* response to the special needs of students and of the state, and *more* need for creative and effective leadership.

*The State University of New York is the largest comprehensive university system in the nation. It consists of 29 state-operated campuses, including four research universities (two with health science centers), two stand-alone health science centers (including their teaching hospitals), twelve university colleges granting bachelors and masters degrees, six two-year technical colleges, and five other specialized colleges. It also contains 30 community colleges, each with its local board of trustees and each founded by a local sponsor, usually a county or counties, five statutory colleges operated for the State University by the private universities of Cornell and Alfred, and 10 Educational Opportunity Centers providing pre-collegiate education and training, located in the State's major urban areas and administered by local SUNY or City University of New York (CUNY) campuses. Enrollments (head count) exceed 400,000. The combined budgets exceed $4.5 billion, with approximately 40 percent from state tax funds.

❖ *Leadership to the system, to public higher education, and to higher education generally, including the establishment of a systemwide mission, the approval of constituent campus missions, and advocacy for the needs of the state and its students and citizens.*

Leadership, in the end, may be the most important benefit of a system and the most critical need to be met by a system head. The system head and other systemwide officers can exert leadership through any of several devices or sources of influence: experience, special knowledge, authority, or the sheer "bully pulpit" of the system chancellorship or presidency. The leadership from the system central administration is associated particularly with the chancellor or president holding the position of system head, but can extend also to chief system officers over academic affairs, student affairs, business affairs and finance, as well as to central system officers with systemwide authority in such specialized arenas as higher education law or educational technology.

One test of leadership, very simply, is the degree to which a systemwide officer is followed — not because the officer is in a position to give orders or requires obeisance in return for resources or other favors or out of fear of retribution, but because he or she is considered to be an especially effective problem solver or a stimulating thinker or to be in special touch with others on the outside who are the seminal thinkers of higher education. A leader is one who shapes events; who makes a difference; who formulates an agenda and is in some degree of control over it. A leader is turned to, listened to, and read by his or her peers and by others who want to know what is happening to the system and to higher education generally.

Leadership at a system level requires a system head and other top system officers who:

- Are knowledgeable about higher education generally;

- Have some credible original views about higher education that are of relevance to the system;
- Can communicate these ideas effectively;
- Take the time to develop their ideas in major oral presentations and in nationally published forums;
- Know not just what should be done, but how to change the system — i.e., know process and implementation as well as the desired outcome;
- Are strong enough to persevere through resistance and even, at times, opposition;
- Maintain support within the system, especially from presidents and other campus officers, heads of systemwide faculty and student organizations, and trustees; and
- Develop credibility and recognition among peers from outside the system.

The "inside" objects of system leadership should be the member campus heads, the system trustees, other systemwide officers, the state governor and legislative leaders, faculty and student leaders, and others within the system. "Outside" objects of leadership might include other campus and system heads, national journalists, association heads and other higher education opinion makers, and foundation or governmental agency heads in positions to help and or to influence higher education.

The successful exercise of system leadership should lead, for example, to:

- A recognition on the part of campus heads, faculty, and others that there must be a system mission that is more than the sum of the missions of the member campuses;
- A shared sense of this system mission, with recognition of the shaping role of the system head, the confirming role of the board, and the generating and executing roles of the campus faculty and staff;

- Boards of trustees whose members are committed, knowledgeable, involved, and independent, yet also focused, unified, and effective;

- Degree programs that respond to the needs of students, the larger society, and potential employers, but that reflect also the American traditions of commitment to general and liberal education;

- Standards — for both faculty and students — that are rigorous, honest, challenging, and appropriate to the mission of the particular institution;

- The reconciliation of thorny and potentially contentious goals such as academic freedom and the promulgation of civil and tolerant speech;

- The implementation of difficult and risky academic innovations such as distance learning, new forms of assessment, interdisciplinary programs, or novel academic calendars;

- The establishment of clear priorities during financial austerity, when "low priority" is sure to cause pain, opposition, and possible loss of programs and colleagues;

- The implementation of new and higher levels of expectation for stewardship and productivity.

SUNY: The SUNY chancellor, provost, and vice provost led the effort and did much of the writing that culminated in the long-range system plan, *SUNY 2000: A Vision for the New Century*. This plan set forth five systemwide goals: access (to many constituencies, including the very able); excellence in undergraduate education and teaching; excellence in research and in graduate and advanced professional education; meeting state needs (especially in public education, health, economic development, environmental conservation, and social services and welfare); and cost-effective management. The provost has begun a campus planning process that is responsive to the vision and the specific goals of *SUNY 2000*.

The chancellor and vice chancellors have focused on a clear action agenda that has featured, e.g.: the development and implementation of a decentralized "benchmark" budget system, and a reform and further decentralization of sponsored research administration and the allocation of indirect cost recoveries. They have led in the formation of, e.g.: campus-specific assessment policies; campus goals for, and a new emphasis on, fund raising; systemwide set-asides for the hiring of minority faculty and for campus academic "ventures"; strengthened articulation policies between two- and four-year institutions; and a new plan for systemwide educational and administrative technology. Central Administration leadership led to major systemwide programs such as the Engineering Initiative, the Graduate Education and Research Initiative, campus assessment, and the still-forming Technology Initiative.

The chancellor, provost, and vice provost have been aggressive in their promotion of themes such as heightened expectations for entering freshmen, campus obligations to meet state needs, and the imperative of scholarly expectation, in some appropriate form, for all SUNY faculty. The vice chancellor for student affairs has provided a strong system emphasis on multiculturalism and on a reform of student governance. The senior vice chancellor and the university auditor have tightened up on system expectations for good stewardship and the implementation of audit recommendations. The vice chancellor for business and finance has led the way toward greater system decentralization — with effective systemwide incentives and controls. The provost and other officers have led the health science centers with teaching hospitals to a reconceptualization of their structure and governance. The deputy to the chancellor for community colleges has led the positioning of those colleges as main points of student access and service to local business and also led the team that has reconceptualized policies of state support for the system's 30 community colleges.

The chancellor's leadership in wider higher educational arenas has included service on the executive board of the nation's umbrella higher education association, the American Council on Education, on the trustees of The College Board (as chair-elect), and on the National Association of System Heads (as president). He speaks and publishes in his own research fields of higher educational finance and international comparative higher education, as well as on such nationally current topics as academic freedom, multiculturalism, medical education, public service, secondary education, and higher educational productivity.

❖ *The appointment, compensation, periodic evaluation, occasional removal, and constant support of campus or institutional chief operating officers.*

The most important function of any board, arguably, is to select, develop, and keep (or remove) a chief executive officer. Similarly, the most important single task of the system board and the system head is to obtain and maintain effective campus leadership. A campus president should be able to find in the chancellor and other top system executives, as well as in his or her fellow campus heads, advice, support, inspiration, solace, a forum for new ideas, and an occasional useful scapegoat or authoritative source for difficult policies and actions.

In most systems, the chancellor or president who is system head is a chief executive officer (CEO) to whom, or at least through whom to the board, all campus heads report and who has, on behalf of the board, virtual appointment and removal authority — always subject to system board approval and further constrained by the other major players in academic governance such as campus boards or councils and faculty senates. In some systems, particularly smaller ones, the system head may be better described as the chief staff officer of the governing board, with the individual campus heads reporting directly to the system board. Such a system head may still, however,

exercise very great influence and carry considerable authority in relations with the campus heads.

SUNY: The Office of the Chancellor executes Board of Trustee policies governing presidential searches for all of the 29 state-operated campuses, recommends to the board the final nominee of the local campus council, and conducts an extensive formal evaluation of each president approximately every five years (requiring, with turnover, about four such evaluations yearly). For the 30 community college presidencies and the five statutory college deanships, the actual appointments are made by the local community college boards of trustees or, for the statutory colleges, by Cornell or Alfred University, and approved by the chancellor and SUNY trustees.

The chancellor and other Central Administration officers meet throughout the year with the campus presidents: twice a year in a retreat with all presidents, through conference calls to all presidents as needed (particularly frequent in times of budget crisis), monthly with a representative Council of Presidents, several times yearly for each of several sector groupings (e.g., community colleges, university colleges, university centers), and throughout the year in special visits to the campuses or in campus visits to the Central Administration.

❖ *The allocation of resources among the institutions comprising the system.*

Increasingly in the current prolonged period of fiscal austerity, the allocation of resources is more an allocation of cuts or of pain. Nevertheless, the principal *raison d'etre* of a multi-campus system is that the system board and its central administration, with appropriate consultation and in conformance with duly established (and, it is to be hoped, understandable and generally agreed upon) policies, is better able to make the critical and difficult resource allocation decisions, on the basis of academic judgments and in the long-run best interests of the university, than are most strictly political or regulatory offices.

This system function is exercised in a variety of ways, e.g.:

- The establishment of whatever formula translates campus enrollments, programs, and missions into operating budget requests and final budget authority;
- The establishment or approval, and the final prioritizing, of special systemwide budget requests for, e.g., capital projects, organized research, or special budgetary initiatives;
- Approval or disapproval of campus master plans, new academic programs, and of campus enrollment targets; and
- The management of mid-year "out-of-cycle" budget rescissions or other financial crises.

The resource allocation authority vested in the system board and system central administration may be great, as in those states that provide a virtual "single line" appropriation to the system, or may be very limited, as in those states where each campus is separately budgeted, with no interchange authority reserved for the system and where the campus allocations are devised by the state budget office or by the legislature. Even in states in which the system resource allocation authority may seem minimal, however, the central administration and system board can exercise very significant influence in their control over the initial system budget requests and in their interface with key legislative committees and the state budget office. Similarly, the systems that enjoy the greatest seeming autonomy in resource allocation must still contend with earmarked appropriations outside the system operating budget, as well as with the ultimate and inescapable authority of the legislature and governor to lower appropriations in response to, even as avowed remonstration for, system decisions that run contrary to the wishes of the state government.

SUNY: The Central Administration plans and executes operating budgets that in 1991-92 totaled more than $4.5 billion. Some $3.5 billion is for the 29 state-operated campuses for which the

trustees and Central Administration have full responsibility for long-range financial planning, annual budget requests, budget negotiations with the executive and legislature, final financial plans and operating budgets for the individual campuses, and any mid-cycle recisions or other adjustments. Budgets of all 30 community colleges must also be approved and monitored. The capital budget is also planned and approved centrally, although the execution is the responsibility of the central State University Construction Fund, a legally separate but closely affiliated public benefit corporation, which in 1991-92 was actively involved in 30 major construction projects valued at more than $700 million, plus dozens of smaller construction and rehabilitation projects.

The SUNY Central Administration management philosophy is to delegate resource allocation decisions as much as possible to the campuses and the campus presidents. Thus, allocations of funds (or cuts) among academic departments, schools, or administrative and support offices, or among broad areas such as student affairs or maintenance, are essentially campus decisions. But maximum decentralization is only workable with an initial intercampus budget allocation system that has credibility and support — i.e., that appropriately and defendably apportions resources, however scarce, among campuses as disparate as a research university center with a teaching hospital, such as Stony Brook with its consolidated annual budget of some $363 million, and a two-year residential college of technology such as Morrisville, with an effective annual operating budget closer to $14 million.

The greatest demand in recent years on the time of the senior officers and of the supporting financial and analytical staff has been the nearly continuous series of budget cuts, frequently of crisis proportions: some ten cuts since 1988-89 totaling $49 million in one-time, mid-cycle recisions and $143 million in permanent, real (inflation-adjusted) cuts. Such extreme and virtually continuous budget cutting requires enormous amounts of con-

sultation with trustees and individual campuses as well as with the Division of Budget, the higher education and fiscal committees of the Assembly and the Senate, and, within the Central Administration, of those officers representing academic affairs, student affairs, capital programs, research, and university-wide program needs. The technical staff needs to be able to model and project campus-specific consequences of different allocation formulas, enrollments, and tuition policies. The personnel and labor relations staff must study and advise upon alternatives that impact continuity of employment or other aspects of personnel policies or collective bargaining agreements. The legal staff must test alternative provisions with existing laws and regulations, recommend legislative language to the appropriate committees of the Senate and Assembly, and translate policy recommendations into forms appropriate for trustee actions.

❖ *The assessment, approval, initiation, and rescission of academic programs and research endeavors.*

What universities and colleges are all about is reflected most of all in their academic programs: the majors, minors, general education requirements, graduate degrees, postdoctoral opportunities, special opportunities for, and policies supporting, research, and the like. While this very core of the higher educational enterprise is that which system trustees and central administrators most extensively and appropriately delegate to the campuses (just as the campus presidents mainly delegate to schools and departments), there are four critical academic roles for the system central administration:

- New academic program approval, both to assure quality, or the likelihood of future quality, and to guard against genuinely wasteful duplication of programs. (New program approval implies the need of the system central administration also to approve the dissolution of programs.)

- Academic program assessment, to give the board, the system head, and also the executive and legislative leadership and

any other duly-authorized state education policy authority some sense of the output or product of the state university or college system, and of its quality — usually by whatever measure or measures of "quality" have been selected by the system board.

- Program initiation, to reflect special state needs — e.g., as for more programs in mathematics education or special education, or in short-supply health professions fields like physical therapy or physician's assistant.

- Academic leadership and systemwide faculty and academic administrative networking, to highlight certain academic themes that need attention (e.g., community college-senior college program articulation, internationalizing the curriculum, writing-across-the-curriculum, general education, computer literacy) and to bring together faculty and administrators for discussion, learning, and collaboration.

- The initiation of support for, and periodic evaluation of, system-sponsored organized research, to achieve public purposes more lasting and perhaps less directed than would be likely either through departmental research (essentially up to the individual faculty member) or through sponsored research (beholden to the sponsor, or funding source).

Just as campus presidents and academic administrators are limited in their ability to direct the requirements for degrees, not to mention the content of the curricula and the standards for grades, so system academic administrators are limited in their ability to direct the academic affairs of the member institutions. Nevertheless, system academic administration is critical and potentially very influential, however indirect. Like other aspects of system governance, systemwide academic leadership may be viewed most benignly as the alternative to otherwise inevitable academic intrusion from state education departments, legislative committees, state executive offices, or other bodies, any of which may be more prone to political, or in any event less academically-sensitive, judgments.

SUNY: The Office of the Provost, under SUNY's chief academic officer, oversees 4,590 registered academic programs given by the system's 64 units. Each new program, of which 90-100 may be presented and approved annually, requires demonstration of need, assurance of academic quality, and provision for financial support. Other system campuses are given the opportunity to comment on a program before it is put into final form, submitted to the trustees for approval, and then submitted for State Master Plan approval by the New York State Board of Regents and the governor.

The Office of the Provost also coordinates academic planning and research, including extensive reviews of the plans of each campus (approximately every five years) and liaison to the many external review and accrediting agencies such as the Middle States Association and the New York State Education Department. It has initiated and guided a comprehensive campus-based assessment program. It administers the Venture Fund, which is the only systemwide source of venture capital for new academic programs and special initiatives.

The central academic administration oversees and coordinates some 450 overseas academic programs and exchanges. It administers the New York Network, which provides television services to SUNY campuses and other public users throughout the state, as well as extensive instructional and information technological support to the campuses. It coordinates the work of 41 campus-based Economic Development Centers and 18 Small Business Development Centers. The Office of the Provost is also responsible to the chancellor for the implementation of all systemwide academic goals, including the *SUNY 2000* goal, "Meeting State Needs," which has led to the creation of five task groups working in the priority "needs" areas of public education, health, economic development, social services, and environmental conservation.

❖ *Policies and programs to assure student access to the system as a whole.*

All public college and university systems pay homage to the goal of "access." The goal itself, however, has many shades of meaning, with a wide range of programmatic implications and demands on the system governing board and on its central administration. Four principal dimensions of "access," for example, include:

• Assuring that the system can and does accommodate students with an appropriate range of traditionally-measured aptitudes, either at each campus or across the different campuses of the system with their different admissions requirements. Although systems will vary, both across states and within a state (e.g., the State of California's avowedly differential accessibility to its doctoral, baccalaureate/masters, and associate degree systems), no public system wishes to be labeled "elitist" or "exclusionary," even if some or all of the system is academically highly selective. The system board and its central administration, then, must establish policies for, and monitor, the level(s) of selectivity of the system as a whole and its member campuses.

• Assuring substantial efforts and results in the accessibility of the system to traditionally underrepresented populations. In most states, this means special attention to the application, acceptance, matriculation, retention, and graduation of African, Latino, and Native American students, and (more recently and less clearly) to certain recent immigrant groups such as Haitians, South Asians, etc. Special programs to enhance minority access are likely to be found at both the system and the campus levels.

• Assuring affordability, regardless of the financial means of the student's family, both through the traditional public sector policy of low tuition, and more recently, especially with the advent of much higher public tuitions in states such as Massa-

chusetts and Pennsylvania, through state programs of need-based financial aid.

- Assuring admissibility to a state's baccalaureate campuses of graduates of its community colleges, at least those who have pursued the transfer programs of the associate of arts and associate of science degrees.

Thus, a system's board and its central administration must develop policies and programs that address outreach and recruitment, especially to traditionally underserved populations, admissions criteria, and the kinds of academic and personal assistance needed to enhance the collegiate success of those who begin with academic deficits. The system must address the needs of part-time and nontraditional students, as well as the ease of transfer from community colleges to the senior colleges. Systems need policies on appropriate tuitions and on the financial aid and loan programs that can assure accessibility, even with a substantial and increasing share of instructional costs within the public sector being transferred from state taxpayers to students and their parents.

SUNY: All of SUNY's state-operated campuses and 22 of the 30 community colleges participate in the university's common admissions application program, in which applications are processed centrally and then distributed to each of the campuses to which the student applies. All admissions decisions are made by the campus. The initial central processing allows up-to-date information on demographic and choice trends, and allows the Office of Access Services, when necessary, to search for a SUNY campus that will be able to accept an applicant turned down by his or her first choices. Some 280,000 applications by 159,000 separate applicants are processed annually centrally — also forming a rich and useful data base for enrollment planning and for analyzing the extent and the nature of student access to the university. The costs of this centralized initial application processing are covered fully by the application fee and take no state tax dollars.

The Office of School and College Relations serves as a link between the state's high school guidance counselors and SUNY. It produces and distributes a wide range of publications for potential students, parents, and other parties. It conducts regional information programs for school counselors and participates in "college fairs" and other community access programs. A toll-free number provides information and advice to prospective students, parents, and school counselors.

A New York City recruitment office provides information on the SUNY system to high school students from the city who might not previously have thought of a SUNY residential campus alternative. Because 76 percent of the state's African and Latino American population lives in the five boroughs of New York City, the systemwide recruitment office is an effective and efficient way for the State University campuses, mainly upstate, to reach this large population and to bring wider opportunities to the New York City students along with diversity to SUNY campuses. In 1990-91, some 34,083 students from New York City were attending SUNY campuses, upstate or on Long Island, many of them attracted by the central systemwide recruitment programs, even though all actual admissions are by campuses only.

Educationally and economically disadvantaged students are given special financial aid and special tutorial and counseling assistance through SUNY's 48 campus-based Educational Opportunity Programs serving 13,000 students with a combined budget of $16,404,900. High school dropouts and others not yet ready for higher education are provided basic skills, vocational training, college preparatory work, and English as a second language through SUNY's 10 Educational Opportunity Centers, serving 14,000 students with a total budget of $30,360,800. These two special access programs require, by law, extensive centralized oversight and reporting conducted by a staff within the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs and Special Programs.

Financial accessibility is being tested in SUNY as in all United States public systems by the rapid withdrawal of state tax funds and the need to replace at least some of them with tuition dollars if campus quality and capacity are to be salvaged at all. System efforts at buttressing financial accessibility include:

- A trustee tuition policy, constructed in the spring of 1991, in the face of substantial opposition from some students and politicians, that supported a "catch-up" tuition to a level that would support between one-fourth to one-third of instructional costs, but that would thereafter attempt to stabilize tuition increases to reflect only underlying per-student cost increases;

- A strong New York State Tuition Assistance Program, separately budgeted, on whose corporate board sit both the chancellor and the head of the SUNY student advocacy group, which has thus far shielded the neediest students and their families from SUNY tuition;

- A Central Administration Office of Financial Aid Services, which advocates on behalf of strong financial aid programs at both federal and state levels and advises campus financial aid officers on the newest programs and methodologies;

- A special program of financial aid to talented minority students. This program handles annually some 900 Empire State Minority Honors Scholarships at a total cost of some $1.2 million. The Graduate Minority Fellowship Program, also administered centrally, in Fall 1991 provided 562 fellowships at a total cost of $6,420,000.

❖ *The oversight of board and systemwide policies dealing with the needs, interests, and behavior of students.*

The defining characteristic of a multi-campus system is the single governing board; the central administration of the system thus exists to serve that board, to help it formulate necessary policies, and to carry out, or oversee, the execution of such policies.

It should not be surprising that much of the agenda of any board, particularly after the requisite reports on budget and finance, deals in some way with the needs, interests, and behavior of students:

- Financial assistance, tuition, financial emancipation from parents, and the preservation of financial accessibility;
- Rules of conduct: policies regarding consumption of alcoholic beverages and other controlled substances; rules of acceptable conduct, and procedures to deal with infractions; the balance between students' rights to privacy and the society's need to have "for cause" access to residential hall rooms for reasons of safety, etc.; student judicial and disciplinary procedures;
- Academic regulations: policies for academic probation, dismissal, and reinstatement;
- Student life outside the classroom: recreation, activities, fraternities, and sororities;
- Support for students' developmental needs: advising, psychological counseling, career counseling, etc.

The central administration should not get in the position of systemwide policy formulation and close monitoring — any more than should the board. However, inconsistencies among campuses may lead to student unhappiness, difficulty in policy enforcement at the campus level, and complaints directly to the board. Systemwide sharing of policies and problems, therefore, will be necessary.

Many of the issues that come before student affairs administrators on the campuses are ones for which the information base is rapidly changing: state and federal regulations, campus security, AIDS and other major public health issues, date rape, physical and learning disabilities, and the large and volatile range of issues regarding race, ethnicity, and diversity. For all of these, student affairs professionals need to share policies and

experiences and to learn from one another. Thus, even where systemwide activities and policy coordination are not absolutely required, the ability of a system to bring together larger numbers and diverse experiences for training and mutual learning lends support to the need for some central systemwide student affairs administration.

SUNY: An Office of Student Affairs and Special Programs, headed by a vice chancellor, directs the access operations described under function #5, above, and provides systemwide oversight of such areas as public safety, student health, systemwide student government, residential life, athletics, and multiculturalism. There are approximately six professionals involved with these tasks (for 29 state-operated campuses and 30 community colleges), so the oversight is light. The activities of the office concentrate largely on communication, training, and the drawing together of student affairs professionals from throughout the system.

Matters that have come to the attention of the SUNY governing board in recent years, and that then require research, analysis, consultation, and occasionally the formation of new policies, have included:

- Safety on the campuses, including special attention to violence committed against women;
- Multiculturalism and the defense of diversity;
- Student health needs and campus responsibilities thereto;
- Residential life: the philosophy, practice, and financing;
- The freshman year: its special vulnerabilities and policies and programs to strengthen retention;
- Systemwide student governance;
- Athletics — especially within the NCAA Division III principles that guide most SUNY senior college athletics.

❖ *Business administration and stewardship over state resources*

A system central office may or may not be included in such business activities as the collection of revenues, the investment and management of funds, the preparation of payrolls, or the processing of vouchers and payments to vendors. Some of these functions may be handled by member campuses, others by a state business or comptroller's office. At a minimum, though, the system and the system's central administration must exercise stewardship over all business and financial activities on behalf of the board, including audits, financial reports, the oversight of campus business operations, and the capacity to investigate and to analyze system and campus financial performances.

SUNY: As noted above, the SUNY Office of Finance and Business plans and executes operating and capital budgets for each of the system's 29 state-operated colleges and universities, and approves both operating and capital budgets for the 30 locally governed community colleges. Tuition schedules, all university-wide and campus fees, and financial plans for the three university hospitals, 30 campus-related foundations, and 25 auxiliary service corporations (for dining halls, bookstores, vending operations, and other fee-supported campus services) are likewise planned and monitored by the Office of Finance and Budget.

The university auditor is the liaison to SUNY's external auditor, which by law audits each year the university's financial statements. It is also liaison to the Office of the State Comptroller, which in 1990 completed or had still in process 8 university-wide audits — on inventory controls, residence hall self-sufficiency, agency accounts, uncollectible tuition, public safety maintenance, faculty utilization, and the auxiliary service corporations — as well as 36 campus audits on such matters as financial management practices, disbursements under the state's Tuition Assistance Program, hospital patient revenues, payroll, computer center operations, the servicing of student loans, and state aid to community colleges. Each of these audits requires

extensive time and support from the Central Administration as well as from the campuses.

In addition, the SUNY system Audit Office has an internal audit staff of 14, plus 19 additional auditors on the 6 university center and health science center campuses. The central audit staff in the fiscal year ending in 1990 conducted 31 audits on such functions as revenue accounts, payroll, income fund accounts, campus foundations, computer center practices and controls, financial reporting, and clinical practice plans. The campus internal auditors, coordinated by the university auditor, conducted more than 100 audits covering such operations as student loan disbursements, transcript controls, petty cash, payroll floor checks, vehicle registration and parking, and faculty and staff travel and expense reimbursements.

❖ *Information and institutional research.*

Most systems maintain data bases on, e.g., students, faculty and staff, academic programs, inventory, costs, and so forth. Systems that do not maintain such data bases or the capacity to analyze them must rely on individual campuses to generate and analyze information that may be requested and may often be required by law. Accurate, comparable, and useful information requires either system data bases or substantial system coordination of campus-based data bases.

SUNY: SUNY's Office of Institutional Research, Planning, and Policy Analysis, together with the Office of Information Technology, maintains 25 comprehensive data bases, which enable retrieval and analysis of information relating to revenues, expenditures, student applications and admissions, student degree progress, student movement among campuses within the system, employment and payroll, cost of programs, inventories, etc. This office handles reporting required by law, as well as legislative and executive requests for data and analysis, plus internal requests, e.g., from the chancellor, for various data and analyses.

❖ *Public relations and advocacy.*

Campuses are quite adept, and appropriately so, at telling their own stories, frequently with impressive promotional literature as well as through personal appearances of the campus presidents, for community liaison, alumni relations, fund raising, and media relations. To complement these campus relations, the system chief executive has the principal responsibility for advocating on behalf of public higher education generally and of the system as a whole. This systemwide advocacy and public accountability include formal and informal communications with the governor, the legislative leadership, and many or most of the state's statewide elected officials. It includes working relationships, on the part of the system head and other top system officers, with a myriad of state executive officers and agency heads: e.g., commissioners of education, health, social services, economic development, and labor. It includes appearances before civic and business leadership as well as print and election media throughout the state.

In addition to the time of the system head, the public information and advocacy functions require substantial central system staff time for handling individual legislative inquiries, producing systemwide information and reports, responding to press inquiries, and maintaining some consistency and unifying themes among the public and governmental relations efforts of the separate member campuses.

SUNY: The SUNY Central Office of Governmental Relations works with the legislative members, the committees and their staffs, and the executive offices in fielding questions, handling constituent problems, and working constructively not only on the all-important state university budget and its attendant legislation, but on some 400 separate pieces of legislation introduced in an average legislative session that directly or indirectly (but frequently importantly) affect the system or one of the campuses.

The Office of University Relations, Alumni and Development handles press inquiries (average 4-5 daily) directed to the system itself, produces the university's annual report and various pieces of SUNY system literature, supports the association for the 29 state-operated campus councils, the statewide alumni confederation and regional meetings of campus-related foundation heads, and generally coordinates and assists the efforts of the campus offices of university or college relations.

Finally, the SUNY Office of University Relations assesses, promotes, and attempts to support (within the limitation of a small staff) fund raising on all of the campuses, with special attention to the recovery of alumni addresses and technical support to planned giving. In 1991, the campus-related foundations raised some $55.1 million, not counting the funds raised by or for the statutory colleges of Cornell and Alfred Universities. Because the State University of New York is a relatively late comer to the ranks of aggressive and successful public university fund raising, it seems imperative for there to be some systemwide encouragement and support, particularly for those campuses that are just beginning and that today lack the state resources with which other campuses "jump-started" their annual giving and capital campaigns a decade or so ago

◆ *Personnel policies, terms and conditions of employment, and (if provided by law) collective bargaining.*

The personnel policies of a college or university system must deal not only with the usual range of personnel issues — e.g., wages and salaries, benefits, and other terms and conditions of employment — but with those aspects that are uniquely academic and decidedly more complex: tenure, peer review, workload expectations, sabbaticals and other leaves, conflict-of-interest policies, patent rights, and all of the implications of academic freedom.

A system's handling of academic and other personnel policies will vary along three dimensions, illustrated by three questions:

First, do the system and the system's governing board constitute the legal employer, in which case the system will probably be the final authority in personnel matters? Or, does the state remain the legal employer and the final arbiter of policies and contracts, with the role of the governing board and the system's central administration limited to the strictly academic policies and the administration of the policies and contracts, as with any state agency?

Second, are the faculty included within a collective bargaining agreement essentially like any other public employee union? Or, has the faculty chosen, as have most private research university faculties, to negotiate directly with the governing board and its system administration on salaries and benefits and to draw on American academic traditions (e.g., as in the maximum of six full-time years in a tenure-significant post before being given either a terminal year's contract or the full protection of tenure) and on past practices for the delineation of academic personnel policies?

Third, are the personnel policies truly systemwide, and are the academic appointments to the system itself, with some legitimate claim on a system position at Campus B if the post at Campus A were abolished? Or, are the policies and practices, as is the more common pattern, highly campus-specific?

SUNY: The State of New York is the legal employer, and the Governor's Office of Employee Relations negotiates all labor contracts, including that contract covering all of the academic and professional staff with the system's 29 state-operated campuses. The SUNY Central Administration Office of Human Resources, however, administers all seven of SUNY's labor contracts, with four collective bargaining agents, covering some 38,600 faculty and staff.

The Central Administration also establishes and maintains personnel classification and salary ranges for the faculty and professional staff, provides analysis and major policy consulta-

tion on the contracts that are specific to the State University, and provides support to the board and the chancellor on the salaries and policies pertaining to the state-operated campus presidents and the top central executive staff, which are by state law determined by the SUNY Board of Trustees after consultation with the legislature and the governor's office.

❖ *Legal services and legal representation of the board and of staff and faculty acting on behalf of the system.*

Any entity that engages in contracts, employs staff, runs ancillary services such as residence halls and hospitals, and enters into the kinds of deep and entangling relationships that characterize those between a student and his or her college or university is bound to have an enormous volume of legal work. As with personnel policies described above, the demand on the central system administration depends first on the kind and volume of legal work that is handled by the state attorney general's office as opposed to being retained by the system, and second on the amount and volume of required legal work that is done by the system's central administration legal staff, how much is done by outside counsel, and how much and what kind may be handled by legal staff on the individual member campuses.

SUNY: The Office of University Counsel, headed by the vice chancellor for legal affairs, performs all legal work short of litigation for the state-operated campuses (including the three state-owned teaching hospitals) and provides general guidance to the 30 SUNY community colleges. This amounts to about 600 lawsuits pending, claims, and administrative proceedings, some 125 of which are likely to be active at any given time. The central legal staff also handles annually some 400-500 contracts and other legal documents. It prepares resolutions and legal actions for the SUNY Board of Trustees, and is counsel to the board, with independent reporting authority. It also prepares analyses, legal background, and draft bill copy for most of the legislation

that is sought for the system, either by the governor or by the trustees.

Finally, the legal staff works with other Central Administration and campus offices in assuring university compliance with a myriad of actions and reports imposed by federal and state statutes and executive orders. Such statutes and orders may deal with, e.g.:

- Equal opportunity, affirmative action, age discrimination, sexual harassment, etc.;
- Occupational health and safety requirements, limitations on, and reporting and tracking of, medical and other hazardous wastes, anti-smoking legislation and regulations, etc.;
- Financial disclosures, controls upon outside earnings, and other matters of state ethics law;
- Campus safety and required reports on crime in and around the campus;
- Student health, required policies on drug and alcohol abuse, immunization, and other health credentials;
- Student records, rights to privacy, requirements for "satisfactory progress," reporting on athletes, etc.

In addition to the above legal work conducted by the central legal staff (occasionally with the help of outside counsel), a separate legal staff of the SUNY Research Foundation handles the legal work arising from the university's sponsored research and training contracts: about 4,500 contracts annually employing some 8,000 full- and part-time staff and spending more than $300 million. The legal staff of the State University Construction Fund, an independently-chartered public benefit corporation, handles the contracts, claims, and other legal work arising from the fund's construction and rehabilitation projects, including in 1991-92 about 30 major projects with a combined completion value of more than $700 million, plus smaller projects and

emergency repairs to some part of the university's 2,364 state-owned buildings.

❖ *Consolidation of administrative and academic support services.*

A system can obtain the advantages of scale in certain administrative and academic support services through a consolidation of operations, either centrally or at one or more campuses. Certain functions, much like the legal services described above, may simply be conducted centrally for all campuses: e.g., construction management, research administration, major purchasing, student loan processing, or the operations of a university press or a central educational television station and satellite uplink. Other services may become concentrated either centrally or at one or more campuses through the natural forces of the market and the willingness of some campuses to buy the services from another campus rather than to duplicate the expensive capital outlay and maintenance. System policies can encourage this kind of division of labor in the way major capital outlays are allocated or in the financial incentives for intercampus cost sharing. Examples of typical system consolidation of capital intensive investments would be large-scale mainframe computing, the maintenance of commonly-used software, electronically retrievable library collections, sophisticated printing capability, and such expensive academic and scientific equipment as nuclear accelerators.

SUNY: Among the operations that the trustees of the State University of New York chose many years ago to centralize are research administration and construction management. While these functions continue to operate through their own corporate entities, legally distinct from state operations, and while each retains a limited independent central administration, both have increasingly decentralized to the campuses as the larger campuses, particularly, have acquired the critical mass for efficient campus operation. Thus, the central staff of the SUNY

Research Foundation has been reduced between 1990 and '91 from 178 to 147, or a reduction of more than 17 percent, and will be further reduced through additional decentralization of its operation to a core staff of 130, for a two and one-half year downsizing of more than 28 percent. The savings in central expenditures permit larger indirect cost recoveries to be returned to the campuses that generated them — and that now have greater administrative costs due to the decentralization of the administrative responsibilities. The result is better and more accountable management — and a smaller central system operation.

Other examples of centralized administrative and service functions include student loan processing (84,800 active loan accounts with balances of nearly $96 million, serviced by a fee-supported staff of approximately 36 FTE), the SUNY on-line Computer Library Center (technical support to 315 participating and fee-paying academic libraries, with a self-supporting staff of 18.5 FTE plus one FTE supported by state funds), undergraduate applications processing (280,000 applications for 159,000 individuals processed and referred to campuses for admissions decisions, serviced by a self-supporting staff of 24 FTE), and the New York Network, a professional video service, which provides support to New York State government, public television, and the university, the staff of which is principally fee supported.

SUNY has chosen to centralize still other functions because they are efficient and cost effective, including a human resources management service to provide personnel data to campuses, affirmative action support to assist in the filing of state and federal compliance documents and to train affirmative action officers, construction fund management to plan and finance capital construction projects, and some of the key computer software maintenance.

Multi-campus Systems and Central Administrations in Periods of Fiscal Austerity

All of public higher education in the early 1990s is caught in the fiscal crises besetting states that are squeezed between falling revenues, largely from declining income and sales tax receipts, and rising expenditures, especially for such recession-sensitive state obligations as Medicaid, welfare, health care, and other social services. Particularly in the Northeast, public higher education is being battered by budget cuts and mid-year recisions, generally on top of large increases in tuition.

The State University of New York, for example, by the beginning of the 1992-93 State fiscal year, will have undergone ten budget cuts and mid-year recisions in four years, totalling more than $200 million in permanent inflation-adjusted dollars. Since the mid-1970s, losses to the system have totalled nearly $400 million, including more than 5,000 faculty and staff positions. For some of the two- and four-year colleges, the real inflation-adjusted downsizing from the mid-'70s to the early '90s is between 15 and 20 percent. The systemwide cuts in Massachusetts have been even more severe, while the fiscal austerity faced by systems in Connecticut, New Hampshire, and elsewhere have been comparable.

In this climate of extreme fiscal austerity, multi-campus systems and the central administrations of these systems can play especially critical roles in preserving the long-run missions and visions of these systems, while handling budget cuts and downsizing in ways that do the least damage to the access, quality, research, and service for which these multi-campus public systems exist. Seven specific roles are summarized below.

❖ *Maintain the long vision . . . the integrity of the system . . . the advocacy for public higher education.*

As dire as public sector financial fortunes become, it is essential that a system perspective and a longer vision be maintained.

Certainly, that vision must be politically sensitive and realistic. But it must fall prey neither to despair, nor to a dulling of aspirations, nor to intercampus politics, nor to short-sighted expediency. Financial hard times bring out the worst features of representative democracy. Tempers may get short. Risk taking and extra efforts may give way to territoriality and "hunkering down." The system board and the system head must continue to advocate for the needs of the state and the system in the long run. They must provide hope and vision, albeit with realism and wisdom. They must insist on the integrity of the system and the primacy of its long-range academic mission in the face of internal and external pressures for that which is more politically popular or expedient.

❖ *Provide a buffer between the most volatile politics of austerity and the academic operations of the campuses.*

Prolonged financial austerity coupled with voter anger, taxpayer backlash, advocacy politics, and various political agendas do not form an ideal context for the rational and orderly working out of state priorities or the appropriate share of the state's overall financial burden to be borne by the state systems of public higher education. That share, rather, may have to emerge from the frequently turbulent theater of state budget politics in which the university, the faculty, the administration, the students, the trustees, or combinations thereof may at times be the focus either of unwarranted attacks or equally unanticipated embraces from the state legislature, the governor, one or another party, or certain committees or interest groups within the legislature. Threats of doom and dismemberment are not to be ignored or dismissed, but neither should they be met by anger or despair — until more evidence has been gathered and weighed. The central system administrations, generally closer than the campuses to this theater, need to play a kind of buffer role in hard times, shielding the faculty, not from the realities of hard times, but from some of the more violent and damaging extremes of merely proposed or threatened budget cuts.

❖ *Manage the final and necessary cutbacks with integrity, courage, and the long-run best interests of the system and the state in mind.*

Fiscal crises rarely make friends or heroes, but at no time are vision and academic integrity more important than when deep budget cuts must be distributed, somehow, throughout the system. The system board and central administration may have to protect the campuses from certain kinds of cuts that elected officials might be tempted to make, but that would seriously diminish the university in the long run. Research, student aid, faculty loads, administrations, and salaries and benefits may all, at one time or another, be especially vulnerable and need defending. At the same time, other needs may need to be pressed upon the campuses by trustees and system heads: the maintenance of enrollments, for example, or branch operations that meet important regional needs but do not bring luster to the main campus.

❖ *Let the campuses manage their cuts; provide clear, timely, and fair targets for expenditure reductions.*

Campuses need resources, and in times of austerity need advocacy. When all has been said and done, however, and the budget has been passed and the inevitable cuts must be implemented, the campuses need maximum flexibility in making them, and they need targets that are clear, timely, and fair.

❖ *If cuts are to be decentralized at the campus level, certain common principles or approaches should be adhered to, or at least recognized, at the system level.*

Decisions on academic departmental priorities, or whether to defer certain equipment or rehabilitation plans, or whether and to what degree to consolidate certain support service functions like advising, counseling, and remediation should be decentralized and campus-specific. Certain policies for the guidance of campuses, though, should probably be established by the sys-

tem in times of austerity and downsizing. Such policies, for example, might deal with:

- The revision of enrollment goals in response to the loss of faculty and other resources;
- The general approach to tuitions and fees, even if they may be different for different institutions or sectors of the system;
- Capital master plans, standards on deferred maintenance and other factors that are likely to affect the long-range physical futures of the campuses;
- General policies toward retrenchments, layoffs, nonrenewal of term appointments, and other practices for achieving savings through work-force reduction;
- System or statewide obligations such as the admittance of community college degree-holders, or the continuation of certain economic development programs and job training activities.

❖ *Downsize and decentralize the central administration itself.*

The central administration of a system must lead the way in sharpening priorities, "leaning down" administrative costs, and generally doing more (or at least as much) with less. Three caveats, however, are worth mention as system trustees and administrations contemplate the depth and the kinds of cuts to be taken centrally.

First, while some functions that have been carried out centrally can probably be reduced or eliminated altogether and campuses given the opportunity to pick them up or not, other administrative functions absolutely must be performed in order for the campuses to function: legal services, payroll, audits, student aid processing, etc. Thus, the downsizing of central administration staff and the devolution of some tasks and responsibilities to the campuses may seem like an economizing move, and may indeed yield a smaller central administration, but may

sometimes impose major burdens and even additional costs on the campuses, the sum of which may exceed the so-called savings credited to the central administration. In short, not all central administration cuts will be genuine savings.

Second, certain functions or administrative operations may have access to non-state, or "off budget," revenues such as grant or contract income, capital budgets, or special fees or assessments. Shifting expenditures from direct state appropriations to one of these off-budget revenue sources may be an appropriate response to the loss of the state funds. The shift may or may not, however, be a movement in the direction of more efficiency and better management. The new use of the off-budget funds still has an opportunity cost, which is the foregoing of whatever else might have been done with the off-budget funds had they not been used to pick up a share of formerly state-supported administrative functions. Care must be taken, then, to assure efficient use of all funds as well as merely minimum use of the direct state appropriations.

Finally, central systems administrations may need to protect certain functions, and thus certain expenditures, that campuses may be reluctant to assume amid their own austerity measures, but that serve essential state purposes and that may originally have been assumed by the central administrations precisely because campuses placed insufficient value upon them: measures to increase the number of underrepresented faculty, for example, or initiatives for the assessment of learning, or for linking two- and four-year college faculty. Here, too, cuts can be made and the central administration downsized, but not necessarily to the advantage of the state or the students or the system as a whole.

The multi-campus system has become the dominant form of governing America's public college and university campuses. Financial hard times such as are being experienced by most

states and most public university systems in the early 1990s create special demands upon, and needs for, effectively functioning systems. The hard times also, however, exacerbate some of the pressures on the system central administrations to take especially deep cuts centrally and even to abandon some of the functions that may, especially in the long run, be critical to the higher educational needs of the state and to the imperatives for good stewardship over state resources.

This monograph has attempted to shed some understanding on the nature and functions of system central administrations, particularly in times of austerity and with special reference to the very large and complex State University of New York system.

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